IMPROVING COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR ATTENTION AMONG VIII STANDARD STUDENTS IN POST PANDEMIC PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on students' mental health and academic performance. To improve cognitive behaviour attention in school students in the post-pandemic period, several strategies may be helpful. Like in some other states Tamil Nadu too had implemented online classes such as the initiative of Kalvi TV (Education TV), an online teaching channel launched by Tamil Nadu government for telecast through popular TV channels. These efforts helped the children in learning to some extent. After the pandemic period the schools were opened and the students were coming to school on alternative days. The shift system was followed in some rural and urban areas. These problems were caused due to not attending formal school system and discontinuance in their study. These problems could be overcome to some extent with controlled practice by the students. As far as school and students are concerned effective learning is very important and the same depends much upon attention of students. Single group experimental design was followed for this study. Thirty-two students in GHS Vetriyur, Thirumanur block were taken as sample for this research study. There was a significant improvement in the classroom attention among eighth standard students. So, the activities, Yoga and Meditation, Question and answer activity, group discussion, word puzzle and number game helped to improve the students' attention and retention. But these activities should be followed regularly to improve the attention and retention skills. In schools, with Yoga introduced as part of the curriculum, there has been a reduction in stress, improved brain function and increased attention found in children, which are prerequisites for successful learning. One approach is to provide students with opportunities for physical exercise and movement throughout the day, which can help improve attention and focus. Additionally, providing students with opportunities for social interaction and engagement can help improve their mental health and academic performance. Following the above, we can conclude that yoga and meditation could play a significant role in education by helping to achieve outcomes and encourage psychosocial development.

Kay Words: *cognitive behaviour, post-pandemic period, online teaching, yoga.*

INTRODUCTION

Nearly 15 lakh children have been orphaned since the start of the global pandemic, including 1.2 lakh from India. Children in India were adversely affected due to school closures consequent upon to early lock downs imposed by the government in response to covid-19 outbreak. Several children from less privileged circumstances ended up dropping out of schools. Some were forced to take up jobs in order to support their families who were dealing with pandemic related death and income loss. Although private, urban schools in India were better adapted to new circumstances, government schools had struggled to transition from traditional in person learning to an online ecosystem, especially in rural India. The challenges faced by the Indian education system were amplified during the pandemic period.

These are:

a) Non-availability of digital infrastructure
b) Non-availability of cell phone, laptop and internet
c) Non-availability of electric supply
d) Delay in resuming in person-study environment

Like in some other states Tamil Nadu too had implemented online classes such as the initiative of Kalvi TV (Education TV), an online teaching channel launched by Tamil Nadu government for telecast through popular TV channels. These efforts helped the children in learning to some extent.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

After the pandemic period the schools were opened and the students were coming to school on alternative days. The shift system was followed in some rural and urban areas. The teachers started facing many problems in dealing with the students in class rooms after the pandemic period. The problems included —

1. The students almost forgot all the learning concepts
2. They did not study the previous class lessons, they somewhat forgot the learning concepts
3. They were unable to read the paragraphs and didn't know the art of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication.
4. Their attentiveness was completely lost. They didn't quite remember the concepts taught in the class room.
5. The teachers were struggling very much in managing the children.

These problems were caused due to not attending formal school system and discontinuance in their study. These problems could be overcome to some extent with controlled practice by the students. As far as school and students are concerned effective learning is very important and the same depends much upon attention of students.

Attention is the first step in the learning process. We cannot learn (or) remember something which we do not first pay our attention to. Attention plays a crucial role in every area of life including school work and other relationships. It allows students to focus on information in order to create memories. It also allows students to avoid distractions, so that they can focus on tasks and complete them.

The researcher being a teacher educator who visited the lab area schools frequently had interaction with the teachers. The researcher observed the problems faced by the teachers and the behaviour of students. The researcher came to the conclusion that intervention with some practices would definitely improve the students' attention which would strengthen class room learning. There is an urgent need for an education reform that would create a more conducive environment for learning in schools and result in better outcomes. So, in order to improve the attention and retention capacity of the students, this research study was undertaken to improve students' learning.

OBJECTIVES

1. To improve the attention of eighth standard students in class room learning
2. To improve the retention capacity of the eighth standard students.

HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant improvement in attention and retention among eighth standard students in learning after the intervention.

METHODOLOGY

Single group experimental design was followed for this study. Thirty-two students in GHS Vetriyur, Thirumanur block were taken as sample for this research study.

- **Pre-Test**

  The students' attention was found very much disturbed after the pandemic period. So, the level of attention should be measured at the entry level. The researcher measured the students' attention through Tachistoscope, questioning at the end of the class, group discussion and cross word puzzle.

- **Tachistoscope and Span of Attention**
  A falling door tachistoscope was used for the measurement of span of attention. The maximum number of correct responses was recorded and converted into percentage. The number of correct responses was taken and it was multiplied by ten. This was the percentage of a particular student. For example, if a student is giving correct response up to alphabet 8, the span of attention would be 8x10=80%. The learning attention was measured through questioning at the end of the class (40 marks), group discussion (40 marks) and crossword puzzle (20 marks). Marks were awarded for every student based on their performance.
- **Questioning at end of the class**
  The researcher observed the subject teaching along with the students. The researcher prepared a set of questions. After the teaching, all students were asked two (or) four questions by the researcher from the lesson taught by the subject teacher. Marks were awarded for correct answers and thereby the researcher measured how attentive a student was to the subject taught in the classroom.
- **Group Discussion**
  As a part of pre-test, after the lesson teaching, the researcher was doing this activity with the help of the subject teacher. The main objective of the discussion was that every student had to talk about the lesson and share some points about the lesson. This session would continue for only 6 to 10 minutes. The students were divided into two groups and asked to perform group discussion. The first group students would ask questions to a particular student in the second group. Similarly, the second group students would ask questions to the first group students. The question raiser and the correct answer giving students were eliminated from the group and remaining students in the groups would continue the same discussion.
  Finally, the highest score group would be the winner. The unanswered questions were again discussed by the teacher. In this activity the students were very attentive because every student wanted to raise very tough questions for the opposite group. So, in order to raise difficult questions to the opposite group they had to follow the lesson carefully. That would make them very attentive. This activity would be followed for all subjects. This exercise would generate more interest among the participants.
- **Crossword Puzzle**
  Cross word puzzles are word-based puzzle games that involve a grid of blank squares in vertical and horizontal formations. Your goal is to match a set of clues to specific words that fit each letter perfectly into the squares. The crossword puzzle cards were prepared by the researcher and taken from the lesson. By this activity the students could remember the technical terms in a lesson and this would help the students in retention of the learning concepts.

INTERVENTION

- **Yoga and Meditation**
  A five days intervention programme was arranged for the students in the last period. An assistant professor in YOGA from a college taught yoga and meditation to the students. Only selected Asanas and Surya-namaskaram were practised for the students. The whole programme was recorded and the class teachers were instructed to attend the intervention for future and continuous practice. Pujangasana, vajrasana, sidhasana, padmasana, utkatasana, tadasana, trikonasana and surya-namaskaram were practised in the yoga. After yoga a five to ten minutes meditation practice was given to the students. This yoga and meditation practice improves the lung capacity, stimulates spinal nerves and increases the brain function. After 15 days a student's attention was measured again using the same methods followed in the pre-test. All the scores were tabulated and used for data analysis.
- **Counting Game**
  During the lunch interval, the students were allowed to tell numbers in different manners. A particular student should stand in front of the other students. The students would tell the number counting forward but would skip every two numbers, e.g. 1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 19, 17 and so on. The other students were allowed to watch carefully whether the student said the numbers correctly or not. Whenever the student committed a mistake, the other students would point out. The students' attention is increased through this activity. Next, students may be allowed to tell the numbers in louder voice but may skip 4 numbers (or) 5 numbers in between. This is an interesting activity and the students' attention improved because the students are watching clearly when and where the counter committed mistake.

POST TEST

After carrying out all those activities for two weeks, the level of students' attention and retention was measured. The students' attention was measured again with tachistoscope and then question-answer method,

group discussion, cross word puzzle, were also conducted in lesson-oriented manner. These post-test scores were recorded. It is important to note that the Tachistoscope score was not taken into account for the data analysis. It was used to measure the students' span of attention level only. The scores of question and answer, group discussion, and crossword puzzle were used for data analysis.

DATA ANLYSIS

All the data were collected and tabulated. The quantitative data obtained from 32 students were analysed by using descriptive statistics. Paired 't' test for total score was employed by using SPSS statistics version 24.

T - Test

Table – 1: Showing the Mean, S.D. and Effect Size values for Pre-test and Post-test scores of students

Test	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard mean error	't' value	p-value
Pre test	32	39.75	6.65	117	24.03	000
Post test	32	67.93	6.08	107		

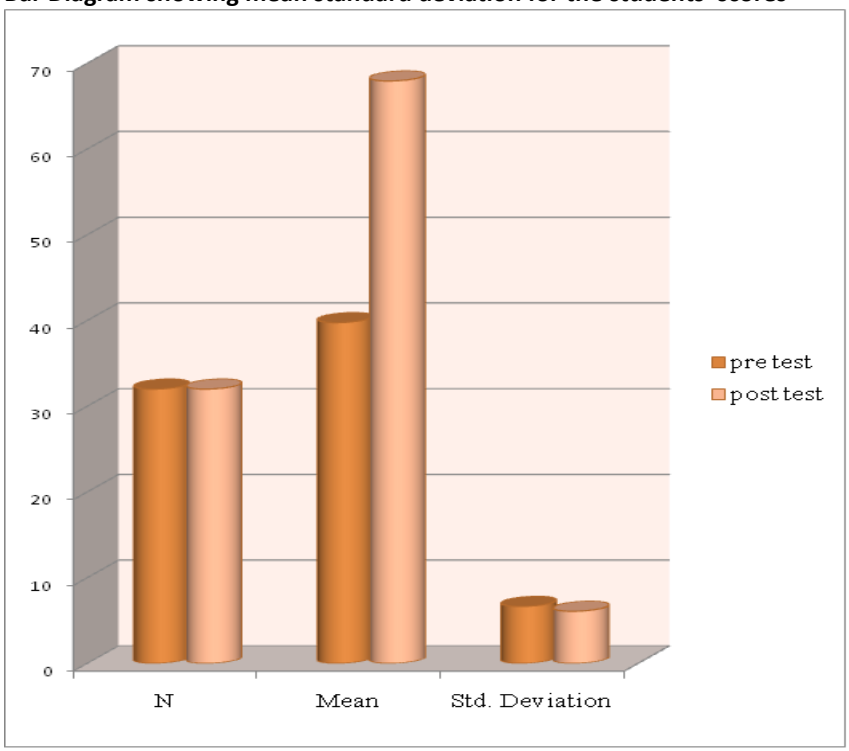
The results of mean, standard deviation, 't' value for scores were presented in table number. The mean of pre-test, post-test scores was found to be 39.76 and 67.93 respectively. The mean difference was found to be 28.18. The 't' value was 24.03 at $p < 0001$ and it is statistically significant at 1% level. So the result shows that there was a significant improvement in the classroom attention among eighth standard students.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

There was no significant improvement in attention and retention among eighth standard students in learning after intervention. (Hypothesis)

This hypothesis was rejected. The 't' value was found to be 24.03 and 'p' value was less than 0.0001 for the score and there was a significant improvement in the classroom attention among eighth standard students.

Bar Diagram showing mean standard deviation for the students' scores



FINDINGS

There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test marks of eighth standard students in their class room attention. The mean scores of the post-test were increased considerably for the students (28.18) The 't' value was found to be 24.03 and 'p' value was lesser than 0.0001 and the null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant improvement in the classroom attention among eighth standard students. So, the activities, *Yoga* and Meditation, Question and answer activity, group discussion, word puzzle and number game helped to improve the students' attention and retention. But these activities should be followed regularly to improve the attention and retention skills.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Generally, the students' unrest in all aspects increased after pandemic period. If the students' concentration is focussed on study, they will be alright and all other misbehaviour will be controlled. So, these activities should be used to improve attention and learning of all other class students, particularly in public examination classes. The primary class students too suffered and they didn't know even Tamil and English letters, words and their writing. So, these activities may be given to them to improve their learning too.

CONCLUSION

In schools, with *Yoga* introduced as part of the curriculum, there has been a reduction in stress, improved brain function and increased attention found in children, which are prerequisites for successful learning. Following the above, we can conclude that yoga and meditation could play a significant role in education by helping to achieve outcomes and encourage psychosocial development.

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